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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 KATHMANDU 001592

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SUBJECT: WEEKLY NEPAL MEDIA REPORT FROM AUGUST 3 TO 9, 2004

STATE FOR NP, AC, PM

STATE FOR IN/R/MR

STATE FOR SA/INS, PM/CBM, PM/PRO

STATE FOR SA/PPD

#### 1. POLITICAL AFFAIRS

-- PM to head peace secretariat; experts to back it: The government is setting up a Peace Secretariat, which will have chiefs of the four coalition partners and a nominee of the king as political advisors and a retired government administrator or a retired UN administrator as liaison officer or member secretary. Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, representing the Nepali Congress (Democratic) president, will head the secretariat's advisory committee". The government has

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also earmarked Rs 20 million for the secretariat and the United States Embassy has also promised "a certain amount of moneys to it. (Pro-India "The Himalayan Times," E/D, 8/9)

-- Nepali Congress ready for constituent assembly: The Central Working Committee (CWC) meeting of the Nepali Congress (NC) has formally declared that it is open for the option of holding constituent assembly elections to resolve the existing problems. The party decided to adopt three options - going for constituent assembly based on the current constitution; going for referendum to clarify the people's mandate; and going for progressive amendment of the current constitution. The decision marks a major policy departure of the NC, which had till now rejected the very notion of constituent assembly. (Major reports, 8/6)

-- UN renews help offer; Deuba undecided: The United Nations Thursday again offered its good office to the government for resolving the Maoist problem, but PM Sher Bahadur Deuba couldn't clearly specify what the government wants. Deuba had a meeting with Samuel Tamrat, the special envoy to the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. "The government is creating confusion as it couldn't decide this time as well," sources said. Deuba again told Tamrat that the government would "certainly" tell the UN about its need whenever it was felt necessary. (The Himalayan Times, 8/6)

-- Polls not possible in current scenario, parties tell CEC: Major political parties in the dissolved House of Representatives today said parliamentary elections were not possible unless the Maoist problem was addressed and the security situation had improved in the country. Representatives of eight political parties expressed this view during an interaction with the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) at his office. (Media reports, 8/6)

-- Local bodies goes to civil servants: The Ministry of Local Development Thursday handed over the local bodies to government staffers as per the first amendment to the Local Self-governance Ordinance, 2004. "The job of the elected political representatives will be done by the office heads of the local bodies from today till the elected representatives come to power either through elections or through some other means," Minister for Local Development Yubraj Gyawali said. (The Himalayan Times, 8/6)

#### 2. MAOIST INSURGENCY

-- 4,000 youths, students forced into training: "Maoist rebels are forcing over 4,000 youths, including school students, into militia training in an undisclosed location." (Centrist "The Kathmandu Post," E/D, 8/7)

-- Maoists loot diplomatic vehicle: Maoists looted a blue-plate motorcycle belonging to the United Nations (UN) and abducted a UN staff riding the bike. The rebels released the staff on Tuesday but have not returned the UN motorcycle. (The Kathmandu Post, 8/7)

-- Valley, Maoists' next target: The Maoists are planning to launch a massive attack in the capital or its surroundings, a strategy they are taking up to show that the government is not serious for talks. The

party is said to have done all its homework for talks and is now concentrating on attacks. "All the party sister organizations have been called for assistance," a Maoist source said. (Pro-Nepali Congress "Bimarsha," V/W, 8/6)

-- Maoists threaten to shut down many companies: The Maoists have threatened to close down many multinational companies in different districts, including Kathmandu, from August 17 saying the government is not serious about meeting a charter of 11-points forwarded by them. They issued this threat in a press statement issued today by the Maoist-aligned trade union. (The Himalayan Times, 8/5)

-- AI urges Prachanda to stop abductions: The Amnesty International (AI) has asked Maoist leader Prachanda to order an immediate halt to abductions of civilians and their unconditional release. In a statement issued Wednesday, the AI has expressed serious concern over recent rights violations of civilians including human rights defenders and journalists by the Maoists. (Media reports, 8/5)

-- Maoists forcibly abduct 5000 for training: Maoist rebels have forced more than five thousand people to participate in their training campaigns in Achham district since the second week of July. "More than five thousand people have been forced to take part in the 'unified command' in the first phase, though they don't want to be involved in the military training," said Gangaram, a Maoist leader. According to people who escaped the training camps, the rebels have provided combat dresses, Khukuris [Nepali curved knives], guns and other weapons to the people. (Centrist "Kantipur," V/D, 8/3)

### 13. NEPAL-U.S.

-- Immediate ceasefire not possible: "...American ambassador James Francis Moriarty's learning of Nepali language within two months of being appointed ambassador shows how sensitive he is towards Nepal's affairs. It seems that he wants to learn about the Nepali people by reaching the ground level and not be hypocrite by forming opinions through the meetings with elites only". As soon as he came he held a huge press conference and gave interviews in an attempt to clarify the American stance". The former ambassador Malinowski neither tried to understand the mind of ordinary people nor did he hold any press conference. Unlike Malinowski, who used to give interviews to the papers he chose, Moriarty's attempt to meet journalists from all sides and give interviews has been widely appreciated..." (Op-ed in Pro-Nepali Congress Democratic "Tarun," V/W, 8/9)

-- American efficiency and our understanding: "... I think we have immensely misunderstood America. There is poverty and unemployment... The papers are filled with crime stories. The media gives a lot of attention to local issues. We might have more knowledge about international affairs than them but they are careful not to let the country get disrepute. They are supportive of the government, no matter which party forms it". What hurt me was that our country is known throughout the world for just two things - Sagarmatha and Lumbini. It is sad that many people do not know about the bravery of Gurkhas, our geographical and cultural diversity. If we can spend some money and get people around the world to see our country, that would not only enhance the tourism industry but also give Gautam in Bimarsha, V/W. He recently came back from a USG-sponsored 45-day long program at Multinational Institute of American Studies, New York University, 8/6)

-- America to take care of its supporters: "As a part of its increased interests on Nepal's affairs, America is now going to financially nurture its supporters. It is understood that the former Fulbrighters, Humphreys and IVPS are being identified for this purpose. Out of those fellows, the "America devotees" would be found out and they would be given responsibility of some profitable work. According to reports, in return they will have to provide right information to the American Embassy". America thinks that the results of the new program, brought immediately after the new ambassador James F. Moriarty took office, would be very benefiting..." (New publication "Yugpatra," V/W, 8/5)

-- American team's jail tour: "You must be aware of the activities of Indian and American intelligence agencies, RAW and CIA respectively but you might be surprised to hear that the American Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is also active in Nepal. The fact was revealed after a FBI team met and interrogated

Maoist rebel Krishna Hari Sainju at the Nakkhu jail. A team of two American members had questioned Sainju two times over a period of two months..." Americans had said that they wanted to meet Sainju to study the reasons behind expansion of the Maoists in South Asia. But the meeting was not very productive, as Sainju did not reveal much. Sainju was asked his political background, economic status and why the party selected him to kill the Inspector General of Armed Police Force, Krishna Mohan Shrestha." (Leftist "Jana-aastha," V/W, 8/4)

-- Maoist-study center at U.S. Embassy: "A Maoist-study cell has been formed at the U.S. Embassy, Kathmandu under the U.S. Government's instruction to find what Maoism is, whether the Maoists are pro-Nepal or pro-India, how the problem could be solved, who Maoist leaders are, whether Prachanda is still alive or not and so on. Ambassador Moriarty's revelation that a new mechanism had been adopted to collect information on the present situation of the country also proves this. Nepal is a destination for terrorists..." (Pro-Royal Palace "Gorkha Express," V/W, 8/3)

#### 14. OTHERS

-- Indian embassy writes letter demanding probe into Spacetime: The Indian Embassy in Kathmandu has written a letter to the Foreign Ministry asking the Nepal government to investigate the Spacetime Network, which it alleges to be funded by Dawood Ibrahim [A former Mumbai underworld don charged of carrying out serial bomb blasts in Mumbai in the past.] The letter handed over to the Ministry on July 16 urges the government to take note of resolution passed by the United Nations Security Council, which calls for international cooperation in exchanging information over terrorists. The Foreign Ministry has already forwarded the letter to the Home as well as the Information and Communication Ministries. (Pro-Nepali Congress "Deshantar," V/W, 8/7)

-- Al Qaeda plans to attack Tribhuvan International Airport: Al Qaeda has plans to attack even the Kathmandu airport, pointed out the CNN on Thursday, saying that the information was received from the recently arrested Qaeda supporters in Pakistan. Nepali officials did not want to comment on this. However, they said that enough security measures were arranged to protect the airport. (Centrist "Nepal Samacharpatra," V/D, 8/7)

-- Nepalese going secretly to Iraq: "At a time when India and other countries are withdrawing their citizens working in war-torn Iraq fearing threats from insurgents, contractors and agents are busy supplying Nepali workers to Iraq. Experts claim that about 17,000 Nepali job seekers have been illegally supplied to Iraq and about 35,000 aspirants are awaiting their luck. Another report says that thousands of Nepalese, set to go to Iraq seeking employment opportunity, have been stranded in different guesthouses in Mumbai since last two months..." (The Kathmandu Post, and The Himalayan Times, 8/4)

MORIARTY